

sheet with a special concentration of carbide at the surface, increasing its capacitor capacity. Applicants submit that the product and process are new.

The Office action states that the claims lack the same or corresponding special technical feature on the basis that the inventive feature, "an Al alloy strip with carbon in the surface layer" is known. XP 002242041 abstract is cited.

The reference referred to in the restriction requirement was cited in the Search Report of the corresponding PCT application as relating to the state of the art only, and was not considered to be of particular relevance. Hence, the PCT examination found that contrary to the allegations made in the restriction requirement, this reference did not anticipate the invention as claimed.

More specifically, the reference discloses an aluminum sheet containing more than 99.9% pure aluminum and 1 to 50 ppm carbon. In a superficial layer of less than 0.1 micron in thickness, the concentration of carbon is 5 to 300 times higher than in the core. However, the presence of aluminum carbide, the basis of the claimed invention, is neither disclosed or suggested.

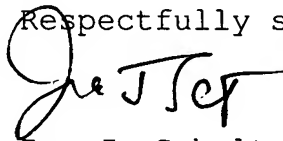
In the cited reference, carbon is superficially deposited by means of a gaseous phase deposition followed by thermal

treatment under vacuum, and not by a final annealing in an atmosphere containing an inert gas together with a carbon containing gas, as in the method according to the invention. The claimed method makes it possible to obtain the product of Claim 1, and especially the superficial aluminum carbide content.

The cited reference does not disclose or suggest a superficial content of aluminum carbide which provides a thin aluminum sheet or strip of increased capacitor capacity.

Hence, it has not been established that the inventive feature of the claimed invention is known, and withdrawal of the restriction requirement is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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